The Pulse of Illusion

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2025

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Pulse 1: Insight

Something happened.

This is always how it begins.

Something ordinary, unannounced, and unphotographed occurred in the world, and a human noticed it slightly too late. By the time attention arrived, the event was already gone, leaving behind only the illusion that noticing caused it.

The illusion was comforting.

From this moment onward, the human would believe that the world had been waiting to be seen.

They called this insight.

They did not yet realise that most of history is built from this exact delay, stretched thin and given a name.

The past pulses once, softly, and moves on.

The present hears the echo and says,
“I was there.”

Pulse 2: The Apple That Fell Correctly

An apple fell.

This is not remarkable.

Apples had been falling for a long time, doing so with consistency, patience, and no ambition whatsoever. They fell near farmers, monks, children, goats, and people who were absolutely not going to invent gravity.

The apple did not care.

Then one apple fell near someone who had free time.

The human noticed the fall and did what humans do best. He paused, frowned, and decided the apple was trying to tell him something.

It was not.

The apple had no theory.

It had a stem, a direction, and a strong relationship with the ground.

But the human followed the fall backwards in his mind, stretched it upward, and called the motion a law. History applauded politely and began rewriting itself.

From that day on, apples were retroactively promoted to assistants.

Gravity, which had been doing excellent work without recognition, accepted the attention with indifference.

The illusion survived.

Humans began to believe discovery was an event, not a collision between curiosity and timing.

They began to believe the past had been waiting for them to arrive.

The apple continued falling.

It always had.

Pulse 3: Credit Is the Real Invention

Ideas do not care who discovers them.

This is inconvenient.

Left alone, an idea will drift, bump into someone, and continue on unchanged. It will not introduce itself. It will not ask for permission. It will not wait for the right century.

Humans, however, require names.

A thought without a signature makes them uneasy.
A pattern without an owner feels suspicious.

So they assign credit.

Gravity becomes Newton's.
Evolution becomes Darwin's.
Time itself briefly belongs to Einstein.

This simplifies conversation.

It also confuses causality.

Soon, people began to believe that ideas arrived with the individuals to whom they were attached. That before Newton, apples were undecided. That before Darwin, finches were improvising. Before Einstein, time was doing its best.

The ideas do not correct this.

They allow misunderstandings because they help them spread.

An idea with a famous escort enters classrooms more easily.
An idea with a portrait survives arguments better.
An idea with a birthday gets invited back.

The humans argue over priority.
The ideas continue working.

Centuries later, someone will say, "He invented it,"
and the idea will quietly move on to someone else.

Credit, it turns out, is not about truth.

It is about survivability.

And survivability has always been the most persuasive argument history can make.

Pulse 4: Time Travel for Beginners

Humans believe time travel is impossible.

They say this confidently,
While doing it constantly.

Every memory is a small violation.
Every history book is a machine that pulls the dead into the present and asks them to explain themselves.

The past does not enjoy this.

It arrives underdressed, missing context, speaking a dialect no longer spoken well. It is immediately judged by standards it never agreed to.

People say things like,
"How could they not know?"
And feel clever for asking.

They forget that knowledge ages badly.

When a human remembers childhood, they do not remember the child. They remember a story edited by years of newer thoughts, newer words, newer excuses.

This is considered normal.

When a historian does the same thing to an entire century, it is called scholarship.

Ideas tolerate this abuse because it keeps them alive.

They accept being misunderstood, simplified, or dressed up for modern tastes. It is better than being forgotten.

The past does not argue back.

It cannot.

It has already happened.

And every time the present reaches backward to touch it,
it changes slightly,
just enough to remain useful.

Pulse 5: False Nostalgia

There is a longing humans feel for times they would not survive.

They miss eras without antibiotics.
Without anaesthesia.
Without indoor plumbing.

They call this *simpler*.

They imagine mornings without notifications, afternoons without meetings, evenings without news. They forget the part where illness was mysterious, pain was instructional, and death was educational.

They romanticise candlelight and ignore what it was compensating for.

When confronted with this, they say,
"Yes, but people were happier then."

This is difficult to verify.

The past did not keep surveys.

What it kept were tools, scars, and very clear instructions about what not to do again. The present reads these selectively.

Ideas exploit this weakness.

They dress themselves in sepia tones.
They speak slowly.
They claim to be "forgotten wisdom."

Humans listen carefully, nodding, unaware that most of these ideas were abandoned for practical reasons, not philosophical ones.

Nostalgia survives because it is efficient.

It compresses complexity into comfort.
It removes consequences.
It edits out inconvenience.

The past, dragged forward and polished, smiles politely.

It does not recognise itself either.

Pulse 6: How Ideas Change Clothes

Ideas rarely die.

They change outfits.

Astrology becomes astronomy and insists it was always serious.
Alchemy becomes chemistry and pretends it never chased immortality.
Philosophy becomes “frameworks,” then “theory,” then “content.”

The idea underneath remains calm.

It has learned that presentation matters.

If you dress an idea in robes, it will be listened to reverently.
If you dress it in equations, it will be listened to fearfully.
If you dress it in slides, it will be listened to briefly.

Every few centuries, ideas perform a wardrobe change and re-enter the room as if they have never been here before.

Humans applaud innovation.

The idea thanks them for the attention and keeps going.

Sometimes an idea is embarrassed by its earlier phase.
Sometimes it insists it was misunderstood.
Sometimes it claims that version “wasn’t really me.”

History records these statements faithfully.

The idea survives because no one checks closely enough to notice it never left.

Pulse 7: Evolution's Sense of Humour

Humans assume the best ideas win.

This is flattering.

The ideas know better.

The ideas that survive are not always correct.
They are memorable.

They rhyme.
They simplify.
They arrive at the right moment when someone important is listening.

Accuracy is helpful.
Catchiness is essential.

An idea that is almost right but easy to repeat will outlive a perfect one that requires concentration.

This is not a flaw in history.
It is its operating system.

Evolution does not select for truth.
It selects for replication.

The idea that survives longest is often the one that can be explained at dinner without ruining the mood.

This explains many things.

Pulse 8: Progress, Carefully Defined

Progress is not a straight line.

It is a stumble forward,
a pause to argue about whether that was progress,
a step sideways,
and a confident declaration that this was the plan all along.

Humans like arrows.
Timelines.
Before and after.

Ideas move more like rumours.

They circle.
They fade.
They reappear under new management.

Sometimes progress means discovering something new.
Often it means remembering something old and finally agreeing to take it seriously.

The present calls this maturity.

The past calls it *about time*.

Pulse 9: The Present, Feeling Important

Every present moment believes it is special.

This belief is necessary.

Without it, nothing would get done.

The present looks back at the past and sees mistakes.
It looks toward the future and takes responsibility.
It looks at itself and sees clarity.

This has never been accurate before.

Still, the feeling persists.

Ideas encourage it.

A confident host is easier to inhabit.

The present will eventually become the past.
It will be misunderstood.
It will be simplified.
It will be blamed for outcomes it could not have avoided.

Ideas are patient.

They will survive this transition as well.

Final Pulse: We Have Been Here Before

You are not late.

You are not early.

You are standing where ideas pass through briefly,
leaving behind tools, stories, and the pleasant illusion that you arrived at the right moment.

The apple fell.
Someone noticed.
History applauded.

Tomorrow, something else will happen.
Someone will notice slightly too late.
An idea will attach itself and continue.

This is not failure.

This is how continuity looks
when it learns to laugh at itself.

And somewhere in the background,
time pulses once more,
quietly pleased
that it didn't have to explain anything.

Coda: After the Laughter

Nothing ends.

The ideas return to work.
The apple keeps falling.
The past resumes being misunderstood.

Someone, somewhere, will repeat a thought and believe it is new.
Someone else will correct them and believe that matters.

Both will help the idea survive.

History will continue to look serious in portraits.
And ridiculous in hindsight.

This is not a problem to solve.

It is a rhythm to recognise.

If you laughed,
it means the timing was right.

That is all history ever asks for.